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Minutes 01/10/2006

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2006
7:00 PM

Present: Jeff Thielman, Chair Susan Lovelace
Sue Sheffler, Vice Chair(absent) Paul Schlichtman
Suzanne Owayda, Secretary Martin Thrope
Sean Garballey

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
CFO: Rob Addelson @7:40 pm
Asst. Supt: Kevin Hutchinson
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo @ 7:25 pm

Call to order: 7:05 PM

Mr. Thielman requested a moment of silence for Jean DeCara a lunch mother from the Thompson School.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES REPORT

Mr. Thrope presented the following policies for a 1st reading

- “ JF (adding “proof of residency” to registration of kindergarten children.)
- “ JFAB (adding cross reference to policy on admission of non-resident students)
- “ JFBB (adding cross reference to policy on school choice)

Mr. Thrope noted that the Committee must suspend/postpone the requirement in policy CBI Evaluation of the Superintendent that states that new superintendents be evaluated in December; this is scheduled to take place in February.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to suspend policy CBI, Evaluation of the Superintendent, until the School Committee/Superintendent retreat on February 6th, 2006.
Unanimous vote 6-0.

- “ Update from 12.01.05 & 01.05.06 meetings.

Mr. Thrope reported on the meetings of December 1st and January 5th. The Committee discussed the legal requirement to meet every other month with the student advisory committee; further discussion will take place at the next meeting. The language on the religious observance policy draft has been finalized and will be brought before the full committee for their consideration at the next meeting. The Subcommittee along with AHS principal Charles Skidmore will review the AHS attendance policy.

- “ The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 26, @ 5:30 pm in the Superintendent's office.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

Ms. Lovelace reported on the meeting of November 29, 2005.

“ **AHS Video Club** – Ms. Lovelace reported that members of the video club stated that access to the studio and its equipment has been limited; the librarian has requested that either the club advisor or Mr. Sullivan be present when students use or take out equipment. Mr. Mazzola agreed to free up Mr. Sullivan's time in order for him to be present at the club meetings in December and January.

“ **Update on Special Dedication of School Facilities Report** - the subcommittee discussed the issues and motions that the subcommittee was charged with and presented the following to the full committee:

- a. Broadly, the name Peirce Field is used to indicate all of the athletic fields and courts behind the high school.
- b. The only facility currently named is the track that is designated as the Doc McCarty track and designated by a plaque on the flagpole.
- c. If further naming occurs, appropriate signage should be displayed.
- d. Selling naming rights for fields while being pursued by some schools is a controversial process and raises concerns about the increased commercialism in publicly funded schools
- e. The process for soliciting input on naming the football stadium should include creating a Dedication Selection Committee with a maximum of ten members that shall include:
 - “ Representative(s) from the town sport user groups
 - “ Current AHS student athlete representative(s)
 - “ AHS parent representative(s)

- “ AHS coaches
- “ AHS alum (s) who received recognition for athletic achievements
- “ A School committee designee
- “ A representative from the Arlington Public Memorials Committee (specifically to provide guidance in the “three levels of memorializing”)

f. Discussion of an appropriate way to recognize the contributions of Mrs. Donovan should occur if the aforementioned process does not result in the stadium being named for her.

g. Attached to the report will be the Arlington Public Memorials Committee’s criteria for the “three levels of Memorializing.”

h. Mr. Schlichtman as the School Committee’s current liaison to the Board of Selectman is charged with urging the BOS to look at ways the Public Memorials Committee could be made more diverse so that all perspectives are included when considering naming public places. A request by student representative EJ Harris to be part of the Dedication Selection Committee was referred back to the subcommittee.

“ **Update on After School Issues-** Ms. Lovelace reported that the committee discussed equitable after school programming at the elementary schools and increased after school services at the Ottoson Middle School. Ms. Lovelace pointed out that a published report by the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization and the United Ways of Mass. Bay could provide some guidance if the district is considering expanding after school services at the Ottoson Middle School.

Mr. Thielman noted that Supt. Levenson would present the After School Report at the meeting of January 24, 2006.

“ **Transportation Issues** – discussed the formation of the Student Travel Safety Group to review how students currently travel to school. (Approved by the school committee on December 13, 2005).

“ The January 19th meeting has been canceled and will be rescheduled. .

SECRETARY’S REPORT

Correspondence reviewed by Ms. Owayda.

Consent Agenda All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

- “ Approval of Warrant # 06082 in the amount of \$1,392,457.67
- “ Approval of Warrant # 06089 in the amount of \$209,729.14
- “ Approval of the regular meeting minutes of November 8th & 22nd 2005
- “ Approval of the executive session minutes of November 8, 2005.
- “ Approval of Field Trip (removed as requested by Mr. Schlichtman)

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Owayda it was Voted to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was Voted to approve the field trip as presented. Unanimous vote. Approval of Field Trip (removed)

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

“ Next meeting with the AEA Fact finding groups- will be discussed in executive session.

“ **Permanent Town Building Committee** – Mr. Thielman reported that the opening on the PTBC will be advertised in the Advocate. The chair of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee will jointly make the appointment. The position will be advertised in the Arlington Advocate.

“ **School Committee/Superintendent Retreat** – will take place on Monday, February 6, 2006 from 12:00 – 4:00 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Topher Heigham, Bishop School parent stated that he was glad to see some analysis done on redistricting and looks forward to hearing the report.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

“ **Dallin Opening** – Supt. Levenson reported that the opening of the Dallin School was on time and under budget. Every computer, phone and classroom was up and working on schedule. The Superintendent thanked everyone involved in the project. Mr. Levenson stated that there would be a formal dedication with a date to be determined.

“ **Peirce School-** the hot water is back up and running.

“ **ELL** – The new ELL program has started on time and is fully staffed. Jill McCarthy and her staff will present more details and a progress report at a later date.

“ **Full Day Kindergarten Fee-** Supt. Levenson reported that the current fee for full day kindergarten is \$1500.00. Since registrations will soon be mailed to prospective kindergarten students the Superintendent questioned if the Committee would propose any increases at this time in the full day kindergarten fee. The School Committee agreed to keep the fee at \$1500.00 for the 2006-2007 school year, but agreed that the goal of the Committee is to reduce the amount of the fee.

“ **Job Description - Lunch Supervisor** Supt. Levenson requested that the School Committee approve the new position of lunch supervisor at the elementary schools. Mr. Levenson explained that the position would dramatically increase principals’ time and energy devoted to teaching and learning. Nate noted that not all schools may need the position and that it would be funded from the existing lunch supervision line items.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

“ **Redistricting cost/time analysis**

Supt. Levenson reported on the redistricting document and explained that we must answer the question of what is the time and energy required to go through redistricting. Nate spoke with four districts formally and a few informally. The cost to redistrict would be approximately 25K-50K dollars for consultants and computer software; the estimated time it would take Arlington to redistrict would be 18-24 months; additionally it is anticipated that the Superintendent, Asst. Supt., and CFO would spend up to 25% of their time on the project and that principals would spend more than 50% of their discretionary time devoted to the effort. Nate stated that when looking at the five goals for this year the magnitude of time and effort required to implement redistricting is equal to and comparable to the Special Education initiative.

Mr. Levenson was not in favor of spot redistricting since it would mean bumping students from one school to another and essentially ends up being a total redistricting.

Mr. Thrope noted that every day we delay the start of redistricting is a day that we delay the end of redistricting. He explained that we can lay the groundwork now and set the expectation that redistricting will occur and what it will look like. Further Mr. Thrope pointed out that the Bishop bus is a redistricting issue and not a transportation issue.

Ms. Owayda pointed out that redistricting is not one of the Superintendent's goals and that it would be unfair to expect such an undertaking at this point; redistricting could be presented at the next round of goal setting. However Ms. Owayda stated that in terms of spot redistricting that some streets could be moved without displacing any other students and she would like to explore that option further after the budget season.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted that the Superintendent review the particulars of the Arlington situation, the experiences of like communities, and the resources of our planning department to get a specific sense for the scope of effort required to redistrict and by the first meeting in February to come back with a revised analysis. 5-1
(Ms. Owayda voting no).

BUDGET REVIEW AND APPROVAL

“ Approval of \$35,319,943 Preliminary Budget

#1 Total Budget to be presented to the Finance Committee

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Moved that the Superintendent is instructed to build a FY '07 budget of \$35,319,943 and present this budget to the Finance Committee. The total budget request to be sent to Town Meeting will be voted in March, and it is understood that the budget request may increase or decrease as fund availability changes.

Mr. Thrope amended the motion seconded by Mr. Schlichtman to read:

Moved that the Superintendent is instructed to build a FY '07 budget of \$35,319,943 and present this draft budget to the Finance Committee with the stipulation that the preliminary budget detail is subject to change. The School Committee understands this figure to be its current target under the five-year financial plan. The total budget request to be sent to Town Meeting will be voted in March, and it is understood that the budget request may increase or decrease as fund availability changes. Unanimous. 6-0

Approved motion

Voted that the Superintendent is instructed to build a FY '07 budget of \$35,319,943 and present this draft budget to the Finance Committee with the stipulation that the preliminary budget detail is subject to change. The School Committee understands this figure to be its current target under the five-year financial plan. The total budget request to be sent to Town Meeting will be voted in March, and it is understood that the budget request may increase or decrease as fund availability changes.

Unanimous Vote. 6-0

“ **#2 Leadership Reductions (Budget Area 1)**

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Owayda it was:

Moved that the Superintendent is instructed to build the FY '07 budget based on a \$400,000 reduction in leadership costs. The School Committee will examine the Superintendent's specific recommendations for reductions of leadership positions as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Moved that the Superintendent is instructed to build the FY07 budget based on a \$400,00. reduction in leadership costs encompassing full compliance with all requirements of seniority, certification and collective bargaining agreements. The School Committee will examine the Superintendent's specific recommendations for reductions of leadership positions as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting.

C. It was further amended to eliminate the specific total dollar figure of \$400,00.00. by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace. Motion fails 4- 2 motion fails (Mr. Thrope and Ms. Lovelace in favor of the motion)

The Committee discussed at length the ramifications of the proposed reduction. Mr. Garballey stated that \$400,00 is a large amount of money and without any specific details on what positions will be reduced and how the reduction will have an effect on education, he is not willing to support the plan at this point. Mr. Thrope and Ms. Lovelace questioned the \$400,00.00 figure and if that indicated that there was already a specific plan.

Supt. Levenson acknowledged that it is a stressful process and does not want to pursue this path if no one on the Committee has any interest in making what are essentially difficult decisions to reallocate our resources. Nate emphasized that he is not asking anyone to approve a plan at

this point but is asking for a school committee vote to approve the direction (to increase the role of the principal as instructional leader, to increase K-12 articulation, to align resource in a rational way rather than in a historical way).
The School Committee will have the opportunity (4-5) times to review the details.

Ms. Owayda and Mr. Schlichtman agreed with Nate, discussed the difficulty of voting on the motion, and pointed out that it is a different budgeting process than in the past.

Approved motion

Voted that the Superintendent is instructed to build the FY '07 budget based on a \$400,000 reduction in leadership costs encompassing full compliance with all requirements of seniority, certification and collective bargaining agreements to improve teaching and learning. The School Committee will examine the Superintendent's specific recommendations for reductions of leadership positions as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting.

Vote 5-1 Mr. Garballey with a no vote

#3 Grants (Budget Area 3)

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Owayda it was:

Moved that the Superintendent is instructed to build the FY '07 budget to incorporate spending into the budget presentation and that grant dollars be directed on an equal basis with taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Thrope amended the motion with a second by Ms. Lovelace to read:

Moved that the Superintendent is instructed to build the FY '07 budget to incorporate **and integrate all** spending into the budget presentation and that grant, **fee, and other non-tax** dollars be ~~directed on an equal basis with~~ treated as a revenue source in the same manner as taxpayer dollars. 6-0

Approved motion

Voted that the Superintendent is instructed to build the FY '07 budget to incorporate and integrate all spending into the budget presentation and that grant, fee, and other non-tax dollars be treated as a revenue source in the same manner as taxpayer dollars.

Unanimous vote 6-0

#4 Out of District Special Education Costs (Budget Area 4)

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Owayda it was:

Moved that the Superintendent be directed to build the FY '07 budget in a manner that supports increasing the District's capacity to educate Special Education students in the district.

Mr. Thrope amended the motion with a seconded by Ms. Owayda to read:

Moved that the Superintendent be directed to build the FY '07 budget in a manner that supports increasing the District's capacity to educate Special Education students in the district. **The School Committee will examine the Superintendent's specific recommendations as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting.**

Approved motion

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted that the Superintendent is to begin the process immediately of examining the feasibility of increasing our in-district special education capacity with the aim of putting in place programs by September of 2006. Unanimous vote 6-0.

Academic Support (Budget Area 5)

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Owayda it was:

Moved that the Superintendent is directed to increase cooperation and integration of academic support for students who are in Special Education and regular education programs.

Mr. Thrope amended the motion with a seconded from Ms. Lovelace to read:

Moved that the Superintendent is directed to increase cooperation and integration of academic support for students who are in Special Education and regular education programs. **The School Committee will examine any associated specific budget recommendations as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting.** 6-0

Approved motion

Voted that the Superintendent is directed to increase cooperation and integration of academic support for students who are in Special Education and regular education programs. The School Committee will examine any associated specific budget recommendations as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting. Unanimous vote 6-0.

Middle School ACE Program (Budget Area 7)

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Moved that the Superintendent is directed to build the FY '07 budget in such a way that the Academic Challenge & Enrichment Program (ACE) is expanded to five days per week in grades 6, 7 and 8 without an incremental cost to the District.

Mr. Thrope moved to amend the motion seconded by Ms. Lovelace

*Moved that the Superintendent is directed to build the FY '07 budget in such a way that the Academic Challenge & Enrichment Program (ACE) is expanded to five days per week in grades 6, 7 and 8 without an incremental cost to the District. **The School Committee will examine any associated specific budget recommendations as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting.***

Approved motion

Voted that the Superintendent is directed to build the FY '07 budget in such a way that the Academic Challenge & Enrichment Program (ACE) is expanded to five days per week in grades 6, 7 and 8 without an incremental cost to the District. The School Committee will examine any associated specific budget recommendations as part of its review and approval in March of the final budget sent to Town Meeting. Unanimous vote 6-0.

6-2 On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted that the Superintendent is directed to investigate interest in a similar program for students who do not qualify for ACE without an incremental cost to the District. 6-0

6-3 On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Moved that the Superintendent is directed to conduct preliminary investigation of the feasibility of providing middle school students of all abilities with core academic experiences whose coverage of material is equivalent and whose depth is best matched to those abilities. Motion defeated 3-3

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda

Voted that all budget detail is preliminary until both the detail and bottom line number have been explicitly approved by the School Committee. Unanimous vote 6-0.

SUPERINTENDENT MERIT PAY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Overview of Supt. Merit Pay Subcommittee work

Mr. Thielman explained that in November the School Committee established a subcommittee that would make a recommendation to the full committee on how to award the superintendents merit adjustment pursuant to section three of Ms. Levenson's contract. The contract calls for up to a 10% increase based upon performance of agreed upon goals and objectives and further states that if some or not all of the goals are met the Superintendent's pay will be cut up to 5%.

The subcommittee (Jeff Thielman, Susan Lovelace, Marty Thrope) met 5 times since November to develop the process that is before the full committee. Jeff reviewed the three important purposes for a merit pay adjustment based on the district's goals:

" The reviews that the school committee undertakes as part of the merit adjustment are designed to motivate and ensure that the entire district is focused on achieving the goals that are set.

" The merit pay process requires transparency to the school committee and to the public.

" The merit pay process sets up a significant monitoring role by the school committee

Mr. Thielman gave an overview of the process to be used while reviewing each goal. Review/Approval of proposed Merit Pay Grid

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to move the 11:00 rule until 11:30 PM. Unanimous vote 6-0

PRESENTATION OF MERIT PAY GRID TO THE COMMITTEE

- Mr. Thielman will read each goal and measure. He will start with Goal One, read each measure for Goal One, stop, and ask the Committee members if they would like to discuss any one of the measures under Goal One. He will mark the measures that Committee members wish to discuss, and then move to Goal 2, then Goal 3, and so on.

- After reading all the Goals and measures and noting which ones the Committee would like to discuss, debate will take place on each measure committee members would like to discuss.

- Votes will take place on each measure that committee members want to discuss.

- The committee will then vote on the entire grid.

The Committee discussed each goal, measure, points assigned and method of scoring.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

" Voted to approve the merit pay scoring grid with the addition of general note #3 that will read: Each point earned will be worth 0.1% increase with the exception of provisions under general note two.

Approved grid attached.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thielman noted that the AHS program of studies would need approval at the next school committee meeting. Mr. Skidmore will meet with curriculum subcommittee to review changes before the next meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was:

Voted to enter executive session to discuss negotiations and a personnel matter and to return to open session with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to adjourn @ 11:30 PM

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*